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SUBJECT: MEXICAN GOVERNMENT HELD TIP MEETING WITH CIVIL
SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

¶1. (SBU) On August 30, the Secretariat of Foreign Relations (SRE) hosted a meeting on trafficking in persons (TIP) that was attended by representatives of the federal government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and UN agencies. Since government and civil society in Mexico have traditionally held little trust for each other, and because their cooperation is important to effectively address trafficking, the meeting's purpose was to provide an introduction between the two sectors as a step towards eventually identifying ways of collaboration.

¶2. (SBU) The meeting was well-attended. Presentations were made by eight NGOs, four UN agencies, and seven federal government secretariats and agencies. The NGOs and UN agencies had the uncommon opportunity to present their project activities and opinions to relevant and well-placed government officials. In turn, the government representatives explained their approach to TIP, with the most notable contribution by Nemecio Lugo, the newly appointed federal police official in charge of trafficking issues. He provided a detailed breakdown of current and past investigations of TIP and TIP-related cases.

¶3. (SBU) Poloff worked with SRE officials in organizing the meeting, with the former charged with using its NGO ties to bring civil society organizations to the table and the latter to invite GOM representatives. The SRE emphasized the need for an introductory event, with the likelihood of a second meeting to discuss more specific issues and concrete areas of cooperation. By that measure the meeting was a success, though considerably more work will be required to produce tangible results. Some cooperation between civil society and government already exists, and post is also exploring ways to build and expand upon informal relationships in lieu of orchestrated, formal events by the SRE.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: Cooperation between government and civil society is critical in effectively addressing trafficking in Mexico. Civil society, for instance, is a rich source for information on potential trafficking victims which can be used by law enforcement agencies to carry out rescue operations and make arrests; professionals from non-governmental organizations can better identify victims in detention centers than government officials; and shelters run by churches or NGOs are suitable environments to provide assistance to victims. There is no question that more extensive GOM-civil society collaboration would produce considerable synergies and post will continue to work to bring these two sides together.

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